

KEITH W RHEAULT
Superintendent of Public Instruction

GLORIA P. DOPF
Deputy Superintendent
Instructional, Research and Evaluative
Services

DOUGLAS C. THUNDER
Deputy Superintendent
Administrative and Fiscal Services

STATE OF NEVADA



SOUTHERN NEVADA OFFICE
1820 E. Sahara, Suite 205
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104-3746
(702) 486-6455
Fax: (702) 486-6450

MOODY STREET OFFICE
1749 Moody Street, Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
700 E. Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5096
(775) 687 - 9200 • Fax: (775) 687 - 9101

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MEMORANDUM

NSLP 2006-08
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To: All NSLP Sponsors

From: Pat Cook and Katherine Stewart, RD, CPFM
Office of Child Nutrition and School Health
Nutrition Education Program Consultants

Subject: USDA Alert – Incorporation of uncooked ingredients into ready-to-eat food

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is informing the retail and food service industries that incorporating an ingredient that is intended to be cooked into a ready-to-eat food that will not be cooked or otherwise treated to eliminate microorganisms of public health concern can pose a serious food safety risk. A recent multi-state outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium has been associated with consumption of "cake batter" ice cream.

FDA wants to alert the industry that Salmonella is known to occasionally be present in flour and other non-animal foods such as barley, cereal powder, and yeast.

For these reasons, FDA is asking food service operations to review their menus for these types of products and to either work with their suppliers to ensure all ingredients are intended to be ready-to-eat or to process their final products to eliminate microorganisms of public health concern. Also, routine precautionary measures should also be taken to prevent cross- contamination from raw products and surfaces that have not been adequately cleaned and sanitized.

- During the past two months, health and agriculture officials investigated a multi-state outbreak of salmonellosis related to an ice cream product. Ill individuals have been identified in Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan and Arizona.

- Cake Batter Ice Cream*, sold only at Cold Stone Creamery stores, has been recalled by the company. No other flavors of ice cream have been associated with illness to date.
- U.S. Food and Drug officials, during their investigation, have confirmed that the sweet cream ice cream base was pasteurized and the dry cake mix that was added to the ice cream base was labeled "bake before use" by the manufacturer.
- This Cake Batter Ice Cream was prepared in food service establishments. The preparation involved adding a dry cake mix to a pasteurized sweet cream base and the combination did not undergo additional processing prior to freezing.

Dry cake mix is a product that has been designed to be rehydrated and then cooked. Dry cake mix should not be considered a ready-to-eat food because it has not been processed to ensure that pathogens have been destroyed or reduced in numbers to an acceptable level. Ready-to-eat foods are typically processed to ensure that they are safe to consume without further cooking. Similar products, such as "cookie dough" ice creams and "cake mix" milk shakes, could also pose a serious food safety risk if they are prepared with ingredients that are intended to be cooked.